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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 116282 /22
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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1624
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 6101

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQ UN MISSION ACQUISITION OF FIREARMS

REF: (A) STATE 299104; (B) USUN 6030; (C) USUN 6099

1. ON DECEMBER 10, 1976, MISOFF REPORTED FOLLOWING CONVERSATION WITH BASSAM KUBBA, FIRST SECRETARY, IRAQ UN MISSION:
KUBBA WAS OBVIOUSLY AGITATED OVER CONTROVERSIAL ARMS SHIPMENT IN WHICH HIS MISSION WAS INVOLVED. MISOFF MAINTAINED HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT EXCEPT FOR CONTENTS OF ARTICLE WHICH HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN WASHINGTON STAR DECEMBER 9, 1976. KUBBA SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN THE ARTICLE BUT WAS VERY FRANK IN RELATING DETAILS AS HE KNEW THEM. KUBBA IS PRESENTLY NUMBER THREE MAN IN IRAQ MISSION AND IS FEELING THE HEAT OF BEING NUMBER THREE WITH NUMBER TWO INVOLVED IN SOMETHING IMPROPER. DURING CONVERSATION, MISOFF AND KUBBA WERE JOINED BY AYAD MUNIR (ADMINISTRATIVE ATTACHE), WHO WAS ALSO IN SAME CONCERNED MOOD.

2. KUBBA STATED THAT AMB BENNETT HAD CALLED ON AMB AL-SHAIKHLY ON DECEMBER 9, ACCOMPANIED BY "AN FBI MAN." KUBBA SAID HIS AMBASSADOR INFORMED HIM HE HAD TOLD BENNETT FOLLOWING STORY: IRAQ HAD BEEN MAKING LEGAL AND PROPER ARMS PURCHASES OF PISTOLS. PURCHASES WERE BEING HANDLED BY COUNSELLOR ALAEDDIN M. AL-TAYYAR WITH AMB AL-SHAIKHLY'S KNOWLEDGE, AND THAT AL-TAYYAR THOUGHT HE WAS DEALING LEGALLY WITH A LICENSED ARMS DEALER. AL-TAYYAR HAD SIGNED A CASHIER'S CHECK DRAWN ON HIS PERSONAL ACCOUNT PAYABLE TO THE ARMS COMPANY.
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AMB AL-SHAIKHLY, ACCORDING TO KUBBA, WAS AMAZED WHEN HE ARRIVED

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AT IRAQ MISSION TO DISCOVER THAT THE CRATES BEARING THE PISTOLS HAD BEEN DELIVERED TO THE MISSION WHERE THEY WERE INNOCENTLY SIGNED FOR BY ONE OF THE MISSION'S DRIVERS/ DOORMAN. WHEN IRAQIS REALIZED SOMETHING (UNSPECIFIED) WAS WRONG, THEY TOOK THEIR COPY OF THE CASHIER'S CHECK TO THE BANK AND TRIED TO (A) STOP PAYMENT ON THE CASHIER'S CHECK AND (B) RECOVER THE MONEY FROM THE COMPANY. BOTH EFFORTS, HE SAID, FAILED.

3. KUBBA SAID HE WAS A BIT SURPRISED THAT AMB AL-SHAIKHLY TOLD BENNETT HE WAS AWARE OF THE TRANSACTION BECAUSE AL-TAYYAR USUALLY WORKED "INDEPENDENTLY ON HIS OWN RESPONSI-BILITIES," WHILE AMB AL-SHAIKHLY AND OTHERS WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH UN AFFAIRS. KUBBA AND MUNIR STATED THEY SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES AND QUERIED MISOFF AS TO WHETHER INVESTIGATION WOULD NOW FOCUS ON MAN ARRESTED IN WASHINGTON INSTEAD OF ON IRAQ MISSION; ALSO, IF MISOFF HAD ANY IDEA WHETHER ONLY AL-TAYYAR, OR ONLY AL-TAYYAR AND AMB AL-SHAIKHLY, OR ENTIRE MISSION STAFF MIGHT BE ASKED TO LEAVE US. MISOFF PLEADED TOTAL IGNORANCE RE INVESTIGATION OR ITS CONSEQUENCES, BUT SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT TRUTHFULNESS AND FRANKNESS IN RESPONDING TO INVESTIGATOR IS BEST, IF NOT THE ONLY COURSE, OPEN TO IRAQ MISSION. KUBBA SAID HE SUGGESTED THAT AMB AL-SHAIKHLY AND AL-TAYYAR TELL THEIR STORY TO THE PRESS, BUT, HE SAID THEY SEEMED VERY UNSURE ABOUT WHAT TO DO.

5. AT THIS POINT, SECOND SECRETARY GHALIF KHALEF (WHOM MISOFF HAD NOT MET BEFORE) JOINED CONVERSATION WHEREUPON KUBBA AND MUNIR BECAME MORE RETICENT.
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